

CONSCRIPTION FOR WOMEN

"CANADA is just one year behind England," says Lady Gwendolyn Guinness, who is assisting her husband in recruiting for the Navy. A year ago, in England, everyone was talking of the necessity of registration for men—just as they are in Canada to-day—they spoke of the folly of sending useful citizens to the front while the inefficient workers remained at home. Registration was followed by conscription, and it seems reasonable to suppose that this will take place in Canada a year later. But why should men alone be at the disposal of the nation and women remain exempt from patriotic duty? Already there is compulsory service for women in the harvest fields of Germany; female labour in France is highly organized and only women are allowed to be employed in certain branches of munition work, according to an official bulletin recently issued by M. Thomas, the "French Lloyd George." In England, women are employed in nearly every branch of labour, and now the much-discussed topic is, Conscription for Women.

WHEN the call for munitions was so insistent, many delicately-nurtured women of independent means enrolled for service and worked twelve hours a day. Most of them broke down under the strain in the course of a year. Then ensued a recruiting campaign to register women for war work with splendid results, but in the meantime the health of many workers was seriously impaired. Now the work is done by three shifts of workers daily instead of two, and the results are much more satisfactory. This is a question of vital importance in Canada just now, for many of the munition factories are offering tempting wages, but they demand twelve hours a day, and the strain of working from 6 at night to 6 in the morning is too great for a young girl. Still, many of them do not realize this and prefer to accept \$3.00 per day at one of these factories rather than \$2.00 for an eight-hour day. A settlement worker in one of our large cities says that the night classes are completely disorganized for all the girls are working overtime and no longer come to the classes in dressmaking, cooking, etc., or attend the social entertainments, or make use of the reading rooms. Extra work means extra pay and the lure of the dollar makes them neglect their health. In conserving the resources of our country are we overlooking our own young womanhood? This shortage of labour would not exist if every woman did her share. Until there is a more general desire to help, the extra burden will fall on the few.

SEVEN million women and more are employed in England in agriculture, munitions and aircraft manufacture, in the various trades, as tram-conductors, chauffeurs, clerks, etc. We begin to think there is not an idle woman in the country, but this is far from being the case. Canada is not the sole resort of Women Slackers. There are thousands in London who frankly do not want to work. The Flag Day sellers, for instance. It is frequently stated in the press that 10,000—sometimes 20,000—ladies were selling flags in the streets of London for such-and-such a cause. Where do they all come from? Some perhaps manage to arrange their usual work in such a way as to allow of an occasional free day, but the great majority must be young, unemployed women. And they are not all English. Many complaints are made of Canadian women who are living lives of idleness—sometimes of gaiety—in London, and so adding to the burden of the mother country. It would be difficult to prevent mothers coming here to cheer their seriously wounded sons, and wives to cheer their husbands, but certainly the influx of Canadian women to England, save under the most serious necessity, should be discouraged unless they are trained for some branch of war work and have sufficient means to support themselves while doing it.

MANY Canadian women who went to England during the first year of the war, grew discouraged when they found that there was not nearly enough work to go round. Now, however, things have changed, and in every direction the cry is: "We want more women." From the headquarters of the Red Cross Society comes an urgent appeal for more voluntary nurses; from the Labour Exchanges a demand for more women clerks for Government

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work; and from several directions at once a call for any number of women for work on the land. Perhaps the first is the most unexpected, for until quite recently the despised V. A. D. has been a drug in the market. For a time it seemed as though there were a dozen for every job. Those who were really anxious for regular work soon grew tired of the hot competition for the privilege of performing the smallest hospital duty, and found some other occupation; while the rest became slack as the first excitement wore off, and began to think that "doing the washing list" once a week at the nearest hospital was enough in the way of war work.

IT has only just begun to dawn on the authorities that there is some capacity for useful work left in the average woman even after her 40th birthday—V. A. D.'s may now be 48, and the Civil Service Commissioners have nominally removed all age limits, though actually very few posts are given to women of over 40. It is suggested that the National Register



Miss Owen Lloyd George, elder daughter of the British War Secretary. She will soon be married to Capt. T. G. Carey-Evans, of the Indian service, who won the military cross in Gallipoli.

—which registered women as well as men—be used for the purpose of conscripting women on somewhat the same lines as the Military Service Act. Every woman, or at least every unmarried woman, between the ages of 18 and 40, could then be called upon for work of national importance, unless she is granted exemption. Much has been said about the male slacker—now become the conscript—and much about the excellent work rendered by the women of the nation, but there are women slackers, too.

HUNDREDS of Canadian girls took the First Aid and Home Nursing courses at the outbreak of the war, fired with enthusiasm to go overseas immediately, but the discouraging announcement was made that only trained nurses were wanted. Now, however, a call has come and a contingent of 60 women from 23 to 38 years of age, members of Nursing Divisions of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and Voluntary Aid detachments in various parts of Canada have sailed for England to serve as probationers in the British military hospitals. They have volunteered for seven months and will receive a salary of \$100 a year, with \$20 a year for renewal of uniforms. This is the first official call for partially trained nurses, but it will probably not be the last.

A movement for the conscription of women for war service in England is taking hold of public imagina-

tion and which, even if it does not bring about actual conscription, will certainly largely increase the number of voluntary woman war workers. Commander Locker Lampson, M.P., who has been instrumental in starting the movement, says: "Now that the men are all under orders, it is time that every woman realized that she must do her bit for her country. If she does not do it voluntarily she must be conscripted like the men."

England is now in the preliminary stages of another great enlistment campaign, similar to that which raged throughout the country in the first eighteen months of the war. The posters, "Father, what did you do in the great war?" will be replaced by, "Grandmother, what did you do in the war?"

SO far the women of the working class have done nobly. In their case there has been the double inducement of patriotism and high wages, and in addition to that they have the habit of work. It is almost impossible to obtain female labour of the domestic servant, shop girl or factory girl classes now, and even typists and secretaries are hard to find, for the Ministry of Munitions and the various war departments have absorbed a vast amount of girl clerical labour. But there are many girls who have never worked in their lives and in the ordinary way never would work. They spend their days and nights visiting, playing tennis, and going to the theatre—waiting for the man to turn up and marry them. In many cases now the man will never turn up, and in many others the man who was to have married them has fallen at the front or returned a hopeless wreck.

The problem before England now is to convince these girls that they must do something for their country or, failing that, to compel them, and it will soon be Canada's problem as well. Conditions in Canada have been greatly helped by the Women's Emergency Corps, who opened registers throughout the country for women willing to do war work, and in this way hundreds have been enrolled in each of the various centres. They have also circulated literature pointing out the duty of women to help to win the war by urging men to enlist, by serving themselves in the way for which they are best fitted, and by saving. If we do not confine our expenditure to necessities, we keep people employed in the manufacture of luxuries who might otherwise use their time for the benefit of the nation.

CONSCRIPTION for women introduced the need for mothers' pensions, for women can best serve the state by rearing healthy children, and many are forced to work and leave their little ones when they most need a mother's care. There is a demand on the part of German women for something corresponding to the period of military service required of every young man. The idea is to give every young woman a year's training in those forms of activity by which women through nature or custom are best adapted to contribute to the welfare of the State. They will be instructed

in such subjects as hygiene, eugenics, the care and training of children, household economics, the science of nutrition and the art of cooking. The necessary practice in these studies will be afforded by service in hospitals, schools and asylums.

BY such a drill it is hoped to accomplish three objects. The first is to secure a sufficient number of trained helpers to take care of the cripples and orphans the war has produced. The second is to repair as rapidly as possible the injury done to the nation by raising the standard of household efficiency and health and by providing that the new generation shall be sound in body and mind. The third object is "the socialization of the feminine mind." The aim is to teach the women that the future of the race depends upon them as much as upon the men.

THE idea of subsidized marriage bureaus has also been advanced in Germany by a well-known statistician. In connection with the bureau, it is suggested that elderly and experienced persons, male and female, might give their services to the young men and women asking for advice, and it might be so arranged that the principles of eugenics and race delution would receive greater attention than hitherto. "Vorwärts" thinks it may collapse "because of the scarcity of young men."